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AFGHAN FIRMS FRONTING FOR RED SPIES: SENATOR

By PETER MOSES
THE NEW York offices
of three Afghan compa-
nies may be fronts for
Soviet spies, a U.S. sena-
tor charges.

The U.S.-Afghan Trad-
ing Co., the Afghan Tour-
ist Agency and Ariana,
the national airline, all
have been operating on
behalf of the Soviet-sup-
ported regime in Af-
ghanistan, says Sen. Gor-
don Humphrey (R-N.H.).

All were legitimate
businesses before the
Soviet invasion of Af-
ghanistan in 1979.

The trading firm is lo-
cated at 122 W. 30th St.
The other two are at 535
Fifth Av.

Humphrey, a member
of the Senate Armed Ser-
vices Committee and
chairman of a congres-
sional task force on Af-
ghanistan, says he be-
lieves the three busi-
nesses are operating ille-
gally and should be
kicked out of the country.

"These organizations
obviously have no valid
commercial reason for
being in this country,"
he told The Post.

He said the State Dept.
could do this simply by
pulling the visas of the
Afghan nationals still
working there.

Since the Soviet inva-
sion, flights on Ariana
and the Soviet national
airline, Aeroflot, have
been barred.

Ariana has not flown
from the U.S. since 1979,
but its office still is open
and it maintains a ticket
agency in New York.

The Post has learned
that the agency doesn't
sell Ariana tickets, or
those of any other airline.

"When was the last
time any American took
a tour of Kabul where a
Soviet soldier will shoot
anyone he sees?" asked
Humphrey.

The trading company
claims to provide letters
of credit for American
firms selling goods to Af-
ghanistan and to Afghan
firms selling to the U.S.

"Beyond that, we have
no idea what they do," a
Humphrey aide said.

"Why are they here.
Are they a front for a
Soviet spy ring?

"If they are function-
aries of Afghanistan, they
should be under the same
constraints as Afghan
embassy personnel," he
said.

Humphrey said he had
contacted the the Immi-
gration and Naturaliza-
tion Service, Commerce
Dept., National Security
Adviser Robert McFar-
lane and the State
Dept.'s Foreign Mis-
sions Bureau

Neither the State Dept.
nor the Commerce Dept.
would comment.